

BOHAN THE MAGE

"Pilot"

Written by

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EXT. OXFORD - NIGHT

The spires and domed roofs of Oxford are lit silver by a full moon hanging in the sky. Paved roads and traffic lights carve through the old city. Occasional cars.

A hot air balloon hangs above it all. The bright colors are monochrome in the moonlight.

EXT. PINE SPEAKER'S TAVERN - NIGHT

An enormous tree in a courtyard between buildings. Lights hang from the branches. The tree itself is a tavern. Picnic tables are filled with all manner of strange creatures enjoying a pint.

The shadow of the air balloon trails over them. The silhouette of the balloon reflects in the glassy eyes of the PINE SPEAKER, a face of carved wood.

EXT. AIR BALLOON BASKET - NIGHT

ZANDER

Come on, hurry up.

Three students (20s) in the basket, ZANDER holds binoculars. The basket rustles as MACRAE and REBECCA (shivering) work to throw a rope over the side. It trails over the roofs, gently clinking with sea shells woven into it.

REBECCA

I don't understand, if this is such a monumental night, wouldn't there be more students out, doing exactly what we're doing? Forget students, what about professors?

MACRAE

He thinks they're scared.

REBECCA

What? Why?

MACRAE

Brandell's lecture on WORLDS.

(quoting)

'A night when the moonlight shines so bright, it pierces through the skin of the world. We can see to the other side.'

REBECCA

But then why are we here?

MACRAE

We're fishing, sweet siren sister,
and we'll not go home without our
catch!

To Macrae, this is one big joke, something fun to do while drunk. Bottles clink as they roll in the basket.

REBECCA

What! Zander, if the professors of
Magnicottis aren't out here
to...'see through the skin of the
world'...then maybe there's a
reason-

ZANDER

Shhh! Look! There it is!

A faint sheen ripples over their view of Oxford roofs. A ghostly starlight flickers down the streets and alleys as though under water. Shadowed shapes swim beneath.

ZANDER (CONT'D)

Come on, like we practiced.

REBECCA

I don't think-

ZANDER/MACRAE

(magical gibberish)

Zenphry, enoch along, shree meff,
aspolendill...

Silver strands like spider webs accumulate along the rope laced with seashells. The net trails on the roofs, then float on other things. The air balloon tugs where it catches.

REBECCA

It's working!

ZANDER

(panting from effort)

Not if you don't help us.

They work together, joining their magic. The net glows blue. Shadowed creatures take form. Zander pulls the rope. They help.

ZANDER (CONT'D)

(triumphant)

Darton will be furious!

Below, a hand catches the net. It's not a human hand. It pulls and the balloon yanks to a stop, throwing the three students to the edge of the basket.

MACRAE

Ho there! We've got a big one!

They continue pulling, and don't see that something is pulling back. The delicate silver net is taken over by rot, muck dripping from the strands. It climbs up, infecting the rope, infecting the hands of the students. They scream.

REBECCA

Cut the rope! Cut it!

Zander fumbles for his pocket knife, twisted hands barely working. The creature below, reels them in. Macrae stands, points at the rope, and yells drunkenly.

MACRAE

Shentu!

The rope frays, snaps, the balloon jerks free and floats away with aggravating leisure. A low GROWL echoes through the air.

REBECCA

That's why no Magnicottis professors were out here. They knew what was on the other side. It was just a lecture.

ZANDER

I thought, the way he explained it,
I thought for sure...

The balloon floats away, but none of the students notice their familiar moon is now red, and Oxford is no long below.

EXT. OXFORD ROOF TOP - NIGHT

Three professors in coats look at a sky now empty, save for their silver moon. None of them are surprised.

MYRON (50s) is tall, big gut, bear-like, smoking a pipe.
GEXOL (50s) round, placid, double chin, glasses, toad-like.
BRANDELL (40s) average, all round average, drinking whiskey.

BRANDELL

You see?

GEXOL

This is getting out of hand.

Myron lets out a long puff from his pipe.

EXT. NOUVUS MANOR - DAY

An 1800s English Manor sprawls in the background behind damp trees. A mist veils the green grounds. This is a manor out of time, detached from the real world...

INT. BOHAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

An English gentleman's bedroom, furnished from the Victorian period. BOHAN (30s), stands before a long mirror tying his cravat. Tall and broad, he wears a white shirt and silk vest. His square beard is groomed, all clean edges and strength.

An insect creature the length of a forearm floats into the room with two translucent wings the coloring of a moth. Four eye-like circles dot the corners of it's wings. It perches on the wall. This is a DAEVIN, servant to the wizard, VITAY.

VITAY

(chittering faint voice)

We are cleaning in the library today, as you requested sir.

Bohan pauses, then moves to the cuff-links.

VITAY (CONT'D)

We could put it off to next week.

BOHAN

No. We've already rescheduled thrice. I will pay a visit to Lindbell. There are certain texts on Greek necromancy I've been intending to look up.

VITAY

Very good sir.

BOHAN

Don't forget to feed the Chandry-Spids. They're mating now, and they can be un-manageable when hungry.

Vitay waits for his master to exit, before flying away, chittering commands to the colony of Daevins.

EXT. NOUVUS LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Shadows flicker behind the tall windows of the library accompanied by echoing chittering similar to bats, and unidentified shrieking from the Chandry-Spids.

EXT. OXFORD STREET - DAY

Bohan walks down the wide cobblestone street washed in gold sunlight, fresh. Many people are out. No one acknowledges him. Bohan climbs the steps of a library. The stone facade is grand: LINDBELL.

INT. CORO'S DORM ROOM - DAY

The narrow space allows for a twin mattress in the corner beneath a slanted ceiling, with a desk and wardrobe on the other side. Only minor decorations, hints of Coro's Irish heritage.

Next to an unmade bed and rumpled sheets, on a nightstand, is a photo of Coro and her Da. They're standing on the edge of a windy bluff in Ireland, hair blowing wildly, pure air and ocean behind them, no Mum. This is a family portrait.

Hurried noises from getting ready. A wrinkled coat and messenger bag disappear as the door swings shut.

INT. OXFORD LECTURE HALL - DAY

The lecture theater is clean and bright. Students are scattered through the seats, listening to a lecture on poetry. She skirts inside.

CORO (20) is tall with fine Irish skin and features. Her long brown hair is pulled back messily into bun. Though disheveled, there's something graceful about her, like a bluster of wind.

She sinks into a seat at the back, fully engaged in moments. When the professor's back is turned, another student leans over.

MABRY

Study sesh at mine this evening.
You in?

CORO

Can't, I've got work.

MABRY

Swing by when you're done. It's Friday, we'll go out, have some fun.

CORO

Yeah, alright, maybe.

MABRY

'Maybe,' she says. 'I've got to work,' the queen of industry says.

Coro grins, flicking her friend with her pencil. The professor throws them an irritated look and Coro sits up.

INT. LINDBELL - DAY

This library for magic is all dark wood carved to perfection, similar to a gentleman's club except with innumerable book cases filled by worn leather spines. Rolling ladders and other extravagant and magical features fill the space.

Bohan ignores the other patrons in fine scholarly dress talking in whispers. Those who notice him do a double take. Some stare, some hurry away.

Bohan finds the section he's looking for and selects a volume. He becomes aware of the three men down the aisle. Myron, Brandell, and Gexol.

BOHAN

(cruel smile)
Professors.

The three wizards return to their whispered bickering. Brandell seems to be trying to convince, but Myron is shaking his head. Gexol remains silent, keeping a wary eye on Bohan.

Bohan he does not notice Brandell walking towards him.

BRANDELL

Bohan.

After a brief assessing look over his glasses, Bohan finds the Magnicottis professor wanting, and returns his attention to his books.

BOHAN

No.

BRANDELL

No what?

BOHAN

No I won't teach any lectures.

BRANDELL

That's not what-

BOHAN

Honestly Professor Brandell, you'd think after five straight decades of a hard pass, you would get the message. I'm not interested in your little Magnicottis clique.

BRANDELL

This is important Bohan, I'm asking for your help.

Bohan sighs and closes his book. Brandell doesn't bother keeping his voice down.

BRANDELL (CONT'D)

Don't you care about any one besides yourself? Or is your ego simply too big?

The library goes silent.

BOHAN

When you've past your first millennia, you might be of interest to me.

(giving him the once over)

But I doubt it.

Bohan leaves, taking his book.

MYRON

(to Brandell)

I told you.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Through a window in Lindbell, Gexol watches Bohan on the street. He picks up a phone and calls someone.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Bohan ducks his head to enter one of the many cafes found in Oxford. The establishment is magic only in warm ambiance, not in power. He passes the tables packed with students bent over laptops or just chatting.

He selects a wing backed arm chair by the window next to the street. With a half conscious flick, Bohan throws up a miasma, a shield, causing humans to ignore and avoid. It glows an iridescent blue outlining his personal space bubble. As the blue fades from view, so does Bohan, and the sound of the coffee shop.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Coro pushes her bicycle along, wearing her frumpy coat. Wind plays with her hair. She locks the bike at a back door. Her phone rings. The picture of Da and her comes up, ID: Da.

CORO

Hey... No actually I'm just going
in to work... This weekend?...

She notices a seashell on the street, crouches down to pick it up, surprised to find it here, and decides to take it.

CORO (CONT'D)

Yep... love you. Bye.

INT. CAFE KITCHEN - DAY

Coro stashes her bag in a back room. In the bathroom she changes into a white shirt and black pants, pulling back her hair into a neat bun.

She ties a short apron around her waist, she enters the open room with a pad and pen, and looks over the customers.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Bohan is the picture of repose, his leather shoes polished on crossed legs, settled in for a good long read, until...

CORO

I'm so sorry no one's served you
yet. What can I get you?

Bohan ignores her.

CORO (CONT'D)

Sir?

Realizing she can see him, Bohan stares, stunned. She nods to his absorbed posture.

CORO (CONT'D)

Good book?

BOHAN

How can you see me? I've cast a shield spell.

CORO

(chuckling)

I know I know, some times we can get a little busy back there and miss a customer or two. Would you like some tea? Maybe something to eat?

Bohan is distressed, readying himself for a fight.

CORO (CONT'D)

Right, I'll give you a minute to think about it.

BOHAN

(confused)

Wait.

CORO

Thought of what you want?

(off his confusion)

We've got plenty of items in the bakery case. Sandwiches, cakes, cream sones-

BOHAN

Tea. And scones.

CORO

Coming right up. We've got to help that blood sugar.

She leaves. He reinforces his spell. The shield glows blue again. Again we see his position from across the café: there is no chair or table, nothing. Bohan settles back in.

Coro sets to work, busy behind the counter. She returns.

BOHAN

You remembered me.

CORO

(unloading her tray)

Ha ha, very funny. Don't worry, we won't forget about you again.

BOHAN

Who are you?

CORO
My name is Coro. What's yours?

BOHAN
(without meaning to)
Bohan. That's not what I asked.

CORO
I'm a student. Just making a little
extra money here on the side.

BOHAN
What are you studying?

CORO
Poetry, 19th century.

BOHAN
Spell work then.

CORO
Sure, some poems are magical. Enjoy
your tea.

Coro leaves an open mouthed Bohan. He sniffs at the scone. Finding nothing unusual, he eats the scone watching her.

Coro goes about her ordinary waitress duties, cleaning tables, taking orders, bringing cups of tea. Bohan stews. The book is closed in his lap.

Deciding to test it, he twitches a finger, a red stone in his ring glows, and a chair responds, moving to hook Coro's foot. The waitress and tray of dirty dishes go crashing to the ground, shattering.

Another waitress rushes over to help clean up. Coro apologizes to the patrons, rubbing her knee. Bohan frowns in the background. He temples his fingers, thinking.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Light is fading, streets are emptying outside the cafe. Patrons leave the shop.

A thin young man with short dark hair wearing a long scarf takes a picture of Bohan through the window. This is ARCHIE (20s), a student at Magnicottis, short on cash but not courage or resourcefulness.

He looks at the close up of Coro's face on his screen.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Bohan waits, flipping through the pages. All ignore him. One patron walks close, and then abruptly changes his mind. Coro is the last waitress cleaning up.

The shop empties. Bohan puts payment on the table, and includes a large white-gold coin with peculiar engravings, called a TIMPER.

CORO
(to Bohan)
We're closing up.

She collects the payment and turns, shuffling the notes. With her step the world tears away like the peeling of birch bark.

INT. NOUVUS LIBRARY - NIGHT

The library is massive, dark wood with bookcases stretching into the ceiling, disappearing into black. The only light are the lamps and the fire in the grate. Bohan remains seated in the wing-backed armchair, fingers folded. Coro gapes.

BOHAN
Interesting.

He tosses the book onto a near by table and strides towards Coro. She trips away, raising a hand. Bohan grabs her wrist.

CORO
Let go!

BOHAN
You let go. Do you have any idea
how valuable this is?

He pries the timper from her fingers, letting the lesser coins drop with a ringing to the floor where they scatter.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
I had to trade and original copy of
'Laef's Manual for Distribution,' a
very rare multiplying spell, for
this.

CORO
What is it?

BOHAN

A key. But if you really had been entirely human, it would have ripped you from existence and melted your skin and bones.

CORO

You tried to kill me?

BOHAN

Ergo -

Bohan strides to a map on the wall outlining the various binomial kingdoms and subsets for magical creatures.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

You are not human.
(dismissive once over)
Though perhaps part human.

CORO

My father is fully human - and so am I!

BOHAN

Mother then.

He steps too close to Coro, in full scholar mode.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

No greenish-blue pigment in the skin, so not pixie.

Bohan grabs her head and prods fingers into her hair, jabbing along her scalp and dislodging the bun.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

No bumps or wart-like corns, so not part troll.

Coro slaps him. He stumbles back. Bohan touches his cheek. She raises a warning finger.

CORO

Do not touch me.

BOHAN

Temper. Pixie heritage back on the table.

CORO

Take me home this instant!

A great wind blows through the library. Lanterns flicker, curtains swell and rattle on rods. The fire roars brighter, and Coro's mussed hair blusters around her face.

BOHAN

Interesting.

Bohan immediately strides to a bookshelf to select a volume.

CORO

What just happened?

BOHAN

We are in Nouvus Manor, and Nouvus exists in the magical realm, not the human one. Untrained abilities are more discernible here. There's less...

He brings the book to a table and gestures airily to her.

CORO

What is that supposed to mean?

BOHAN

Your mother must be one of the wind spirits, one of the upper tiers I'd wager. No one less than an Arch would have the strength to breach the human world in corporeal form-

CORO

My Mum is most likely dead.

Curious, she tips a contraption of gold spheres on the table so they rotate on their pedestal. Bohan stops it without looking up.

BOHAN

No.

CORO

What do you mean 'no.' Did you know her?

BOHAN

I mean 'no, wind spirits don't die,' no.

(scans the lists.)

(MORE)

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Of course, there are plenty more wind spirits now than when this census was taken, but only the most powerful could have assumed human form long enough to consummate and carry a child, which leaves the older generations.

Stillness. Bohan. He looks up and notices her eyes. He forgets himself, straightens, looking around.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

What?

CORO

She's alive?

BOHAN

Wind spirits don't die. If my theory is correct, and your mother is a wind spirit, then yes, she's certainly alive.

Coro rushes over to him to see the pages in the book.

CORO

Who is she?

Bohan steps away. He adjusts his cravat, reclaiming propriety.

BOHAN

One of them.

CORO

Which one?

Coro runs a finger down the lists of names, but it's not written in english. She's disappointed.

BOHAN

I don't know.

CORO

You're putting me off.

BOHAN

Yes. We need to – what do humans say these days – 'pump the brakes.' You've just learned you are part magical creature, and now you want to go shake hands with the ancients of 'Nal? No, you needed to slow down.

Coro looks down at the indecipherable book, dejected. Bohan crosses his arms and draws up.

CORO
Alright, what's first?

He deflates, turns, and leaves the room. He needs a moment.

CORO (CONT'D)
Bohan, hey!

BOHAN
Get settled in.

The heavy oak doors shut behind him.

INT. PINE SPEAKER'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Archie holds out the screen of his camera to the pine speaker. Her skin is both stiff and sharp like wood, and the sleek satin of her dresses lays flat against her body without any of the usual softness and curves of ordinary women.

On the screen is a picture of Coro serving tea to a baffled Bohan. The pine speaker's twig-like fingers curl with knobby knuckles.

INT. NOUVUS DEN - NIGHT

Bohan walks to the side board and pours himself a whiskey. Within his collection are wines and liquors from obscure regions and ancient dates. He pours another.

The Daevin floats down within sight.

VITAY
Will your guest be staying long,
sir?

BOHAN
Not if I can help it.

INT. NOUVUS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Coro pokes her head out into the hallway. Wanders away.

INT. MEDUSA ROOM - NIGHT

In shadow is the profile of a sculpted metal face. There is a hiss, and the room brightens.

VITAY (O.S.)
Would you like me to get rid of her
sir?

INT. NOUVUS DEN - NIGHT

Bohan considers this with growing pleasure.

INT. MEDUSA ROOM - NIGHT

Coro finds a fully furnished bedroom. She plops onto the bed and flops back, suddenly overcome with exhaustion. Another hiss. Her eyelids drift closed.

INT. NOUVUS DEN - NIGHT

BOHAN
No, feed her dinner. Human dinner.

He takes a slow sip, calming himself, as Vitay chitters to his other daevins.

VITAY
It rather looks as though your
guest has become the meal, sir.

Bohan coughs the whiskey up his nose.

VITAY (CONT'D)
She found the Medusa-trap you've
been growing.

Bohan sprints out of the room, pelting down the hallway.

BOHAN
I leave for two bloody seconds and
of course she wanders into the only
flesh-eating room on the premises.

Bohan slams through a door.

INT. MEDUSA ROOM - NIGHT

The room is richly furnished for a young woman, over the top comfort, a large bed in the center. On it: a hapless Coro.

Bohan stalks over. She is still. Her face is pale except for the raw patches where the skin melts away.

Bohan marches to the back of the room where we now see a sculpted metal face. Green oxidized streaks drip down convulsing snakes and a woman's face twisted in rage.

Bohan straightens to full height and breadth, the room darkens as he releases the reigns of his power, a warning to the Medusa. She is a statue, unmoving, yet she snarls.

Bohan snarls back, eyes blazing with an unholy fire.

BOHAN

I made you. I'll unmake you.

Skin sizzles as the toxins in the air devour its prey. Coro moans behind him. Bohan comes face to face with the statue, hands braced on either side of her snake hair, close enough to kiss. His hands glow, resulting in steam.

The wizard and medusa glare at each other. The skin on his nose and edges of his cheek bones sizzles, vaporizes.

Bohan does not look away, he waits.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Do not make me end you.

Burning continues to the edges of his ears. A crack echoes through the space. Air cools. A fracture runs through the Medusa, accompanied by steam.

Bohan is both satisfied and disappointed.

CORO

Ow.

She rolls over, but her legs are too weak to take the weight. She crumples to the ground on hands and knees, panting in pain. She holds up her hands and gasps, finding skin melted. She reaches to touch the raw tissue of her face.

BOHAN

I wouldn't do that, if I were you.

Bohan removes a vial from his breast pocket and takes out the stopper, allowing a drop of elixir to fall on the bridge of his nose. Skin knits across his face. It itches.

He crosses the room and kneels before her. He pulls her arm and she resists.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Let go.

Trembling, she stretches her arm out. He takes the stopper and lets the drops fall. She is surprised as the formula creeps up her arm. He catches her other arm.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Don't touch, it needs to grow uninhibited.

She freezes. He lets a drop fall on her nose. Her eyes close in relief. The skin grows, filling in over pink exposed tissue damp with blood, turning yellow then white.

He keeps adding drops until the tissue fully regrows. Coro's face is in bad shape, parts of it dissolved right down to the muscle.

CORO

It itches.

BOHAN

Don't scratch, or you'll peel your face off.

(angry)

Stupid human.

CORO

You aren't human?

BOHAN

Loosely speaking.

Coro is alarmed. Bohan rises, signaling her to turn around. There are minor burns in the clothes, but the toxin focused on exposed skin. He puts a drop on a neck missing a layer.

CORO

What was that thing?

BOHAN

The Medusa-trap. It took me decades to grow her from a fragment. She had just reached maturity.

CORO

(inspecting her hands)

I can tell.

BOHAN

Because of you, I have to start from scratch.

He traps the dropper back in the bottle and stuffs it into his pocket.

CORO

I'm not the one who destroyed it.

BOHAN

I had to destroy it because you wandered in here!

CORO

I don't even remember entering. Besides, you brought me to your home! And almost killed me doing it!

He waves a dismissive hand at the minor detail.

CORO (CONT'D)

Wait, start from scratch? You're going to make that thing again? Why?!

BOHAN

Because it's a fascinating conundrum: a gaze that can turn to stone, now petrified herself, who lures her victims and liquidates their flesh to feed that missing humanity.

CORO

You want to remake a flesh-eating room... because it's interesting?

Coro stares in dismay. Bohan is resentful.

BOHAN

Well, when you put it like that, you clearly have no grasp of the highly advanced magical workings I'm doing here.

CORO

I think I have a very thorough grasp of your workings.

Coro points to her face now blotchy with new skin growth of a tone that doesn't match the original.

CORO (CONT'D)

Any other flesh-eating rooms I need to be aware of?

BOHAN

No, you managed to find the only one.

(MORE)

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Though I would steer clear of Chandry-Spids. They eat whatever they can get their pincers on, and they aren't as measured as the Medusa.

Coro's newly knitted eyelids pin wide, horrified.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Yes, well, you might as well take this room now, it's been fashioned for you after all.

On a psychosomatic level, this room has been furnished to appeal to Coro. We see more of her personality, tastes in color, Irish culture.

CORO

I'm not sleeping in the room that tried to eat me! Besides, I want a window, with a view.

BOHAN

Of course. So says the half-human wind spirit. Vitay.

The Daevin floats through the open door, perching on the wall. His large wings open and close with his breath.

CORO

What is that?

BOHAN

No need to insult the staff. Try not to let your human show.

CORO

But what is it?

BOHAN

This is a daevin. They have the care of Novvus.

CORO

There are more?

BOHAN

Daevins have been known to exist in colonies of thousands.

Coro backs up, face paling even further.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
 (disdainful)
 Daevins are the most trusted and
 loyal house servants a mage could
 ask for.

VITAY
 Thank you, sir

Bohan is surprised. Coro's legs give out, depositing her on
 the bed.

CORO
 It talks?

BOHAN
 I'd forgotten how dim-witted humans
 are.
 (realizing)
 I'm going to have to human-proof
 the manor.

Vitay is silent, not even a chitter.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
 For now, this furniture will
 suffice. Find a room with a
 suitable view, Vitay. Attend to our
 guest.

Bohan shirks all responsibility to the servant and leaves.

EXT. PINE SPEAKER'S TAVERN - EVENING

The pine speaker is silhouetted against her tavern courtyard
 and the twinkling lights. She lowers the hand with the
 cigaret she's been smoking, other hand on a phone.

PINE SPEAKER
 I've got a lead for you.

INT. NOUVUS DINING ROOM - DAY

A large English dining room, paintings on the walls, a long
 polished table with Bohan at the end. Sunlight streams in
 through tall windows. A stunning view of the grounds outside.

Bohan is the picture of repose and command, eating his
 breakfast. A spread of delicious foods steam from the warming
 dishes. A second place-setting to his right. He sips his tea
 thoughtfully.

BOHAN

Is the human up yet?

Vitay's soft wing beats are now discernible on the wall.

VITAY

Yes, she should be here shortly.

BOHAN

Good.

VITAY

You have decided to keep her here?

BOHAN

Granted, it's not the best scenario, but there are some advantages. For example, the opportunity to study a wind spirit close up, without the imminent risk of her blowing away whenever she feels like it.

The tall wooden door swings open with a shove and Coro strides into the room.

She takes a seat at the open setting, making herself a plate and a cup of tea.

CORO

Morning.

Bohan doesn't respond. Coro sets to the serious business of eating.

CORO (CONT'D)

Not a morning person?

He ignores her. She looks down the length of the table.

CORO (CONT'D)

Entertain much?

BOHAN

Do you always ask this many questions?

CORO

Only when I've been abducted and nearly killed. Twice.

BOHAN

Oh by the by the Wall of Magnicottis--

CORO

Not a people person I see.

She chews a piece of bacon, considering him. He ignores her. She stabs him with her fork.

BOHAN

Ow!

CORO

Ah, you are real. How unfortunate.

Bohan is incredulous. A ring on his finger glows as he stares at her.

BOHAN

How dare – don't you know who I am? I could snap my fingers and you'd be jelly on the floor, or a statue for life! Don't you understand that I made the Medusa-trap, and I had ended it. The kind of power that takes –

CORO

So, you're a magician?

BOHAN

Mage, wizard.

CORO

Whatever.

BOHAN

(incensed)

Whatever? Magicians are party-performers and swindlers. Wizards are an ancient order of highly intelligent are particularly gifted practitioners of magic, or – if you wanted to be brief about it – mages. Semantics matter. As a student of poetry, you ought to understand that.

Coro pulls out a pad of paper. Bohan yanks it over and flips through the pages. They are crinkled and curled and filled with a scrawled mess.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Where did you get paper and pen?

CORO

I asked the daevins. They were most
obliging, as you said. Now,
(pulling the pad back)
What were you doing in Oxford?

There is a long silence as Bohan debates what to do.

BOHAN

I was visiting the library.

He sips his tea.

CORO

You were visiting the Bodleian? I
didn't know there were textbooks on
magic in there.

BOHAN

No, I was visiting Lindbell.

CORO

I've never heard of that.

BOHAN

Of course you haven't. It's a
wizard's library, for students of
magic. Humans know nothing of it.

CORO

So then there are others, students
of magic, at Oxford.

BOHAN

Yes, my dear, there's a whole
university.

CORO

I've never noticed anything. So let
me get this straight, there is
Oxford, and right alongside it
there is another university for
people who study magic.

BOHAN

Yes. Magnicottis.

CORO

Which came first?

That gives Bohan pause. Finally, an interesting question.

BOHAN

It's been heavily debated. Did the pooling of magic attract the humans, or is Oxford a hotbed for magic thanks to all of the youth and hard intellectual rigor people bring to it? All of that studying keeps the ground fertile for magic, which in turn blesses the academics with insight. Magic acts as the lubricant to the machine, helping inspiration and insight. It's a symbiotic system.

CORO

So then, the magicians -
 (at Bohan's expression)
 Mages - leave the humans alone?
 They're helping each other, so they don't use them for experiments or... anything...

It takes Bohan a moment to understand what she's really asking. When he does, he smiles cruelly. He is dangerous.

BOHAN

Well, accidents happen.
 Next question.

Bohan makes the teapot pour him a fresh cup, steam rising from the delicate china. Coro pushes eggs around her plate.

CORO

What did you mean when you said you were loosely human? Are you or are you not?

Bohan looks away. This is a soar spot for him.

CORO (CONT'D)

Oh, come now, you play with snake stone for fun and keep a bottle of skin growing elixir in your pocket on the regular for anything that might come up, but when it comes to a question of your humanity, you're silent?

BOHAN

I am a wizard.

CORO

Meaning you're a human who studies magic.

BOHAN
Next question.

CORO
Fine, how long have you been a wizard?

BOHAN
Forever.

CORO
Nope.

BOHAN
(amused)
Nope? I haven't had this much trouble with a human who knew what I am since, well, ever.

CORO
No, if you're 'loosely' human then you started like me and grew into a wizard.
(taking in the house)
This looks 1800s, so maybe one hundred years?

BOHAN
(playing)
Do I look one hundred to you?

Bohan is no skinny scholar, cheekbones defined even in his square face. His hair is swept back on top over a broad forehead, stern brow and glasses. He looks a vital man in his early thirties.

CORO
You can probably sustain your own youth with magic.

BOHAN
I thought everyone knew wizards were old creatures with winkles and long grey beards.

CORO
You're older than one hundred. You didn't even blink. Four hundred?

He spreads jam on his toast.

CORO (CONT'D)
Five hundred?

He takes a bite with a most satisfying crunch.

CORO (CONT'D)
Surely you weren't around during
the Roman Empire.

He smiles at her.

CORO (CONT'D)
Older?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. BABYLONIAN CITY - DAY - 650 BC

The skyline of Babylon is a haze of dust. An arial view of city streets covered in sand. Sandaled feet scuff broad stone steps. A low door in the gutter of a massive temple, and a rough hand suspiciously like Bohan's pushing it open.

END OF FLASHBACK

BOHAN
Don't you know it's rude to ask a
wizard his true age?

CORO
I assumed it would be a point of
pride for you people.

He grins, enjoying how sharp she is.

CORO (CONT'D)
Fine.

She turns to the pad, finger running down the questions.

CORO (CONT'D)
You said we're in Nouvus, but where
is Nouvus?

BOHAN
It used to be in England.

CORO
Used to?

BOHAN
Yes, it's detached now.

She stares at him. He cocks a brow, waiting.

CORO

Why?

BOHAN

Because I don't like visitors.

CORO

(muttering)

That's becoming obvious. So, I would need that coin-key thing to get back to Oxford.

BOHAN

It's called a timper, and yes, that would get you back, but there are far less extravagant ways of getting you back to your precious closet of a dorm room.

CORO

Then why did you give it to me, if you thought it might kill me.

BOHAN

I wanted to know what you were.

She searches his eyes, testing.

CORO

You said if I were human then it would have melted my bones.

BOHAN

Indeed, and it did not - you know, we already went through this part of the conversation yesterday.

CORO

You didn't care if it killed me, if I was a human.

He sips his tea, letting her come to her own conclusion.

CORO (CONT'D)

You don't have a problem with killing.

BOHAN

All humans die eventually. It wouldn't so much be killing you as cutting to the chase.

(MORE)

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Every person on earth meets some place in life which says 'go no further.' An illness, a natural disaster, a knife, even something simple as time. For some people, I am that thing.

CORO

Yes, but people want their time!

BOHAN

Why are you still going on about this? You didn't die, I have no intention of killing you now – unless you prove consistently irritating – and thanks to me, you now know that you are not human. Something which you may not have discovered at all, and possibly died an ordinary human death. Now you can unlock your potential, you have more 'time,' as you put it. You should be thanking me.

Coro is lost for words.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

(gracious)

You're welcome.

Bohan rises, swanning out of the dining room.

CORO

Wait! I'm not done with you!

BOHAN

But I am done with breakfast.

INT. NOUVUS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bohan lengthens his strides to stay out of Coro's clutches.

CORO

What about me?

BOHAN

What about you?

INT. NOUVUS LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Bohan makes immediately for a green vial standing on one of the counters. The room is furnished with tables, book cases, cabinets, cauldrons, and other magical scientific equipment.

BOHAN

(muttering)

I might develop the sireneus
potion. I'll just have to find
willing subjects to test the
experience of colors on the octal
dimension as vibrations
corresponding to animals. Best
steer clear of farms, zoos, or the
jungle. Maybe a crack house in
Amsterdam? The residents by default
have no expressed qualms with
possible brain damage--

A muffled silence as Bohan talks to himself, then indecipherable sounds become more decipherable as Coro's voice. Bohan startles, and then turns to look at her.

CORO

--promised you would help me find my
Mum!

BOHAN

I did no such thing.

Bohan tries to recall considers throwing her out. He turns back to his work.

Coro grabs him, turns him around to face her, and holds him in place, trapping him against the table. He towers over Coro by a foot, yet is so startled that he lets her.

CORO

You abducted me, and almost killed
me for an experiment, twice. You
will help me find my Mother. You
owe me.

He decides to test her, narrowing his eyes and shaking off her grip. He flexes his hands to shake off the prickling sensation.

BOHAN

I don't owe you anything. Thanks to
me you know you are half wind
spirit.

CORO

What good does that do me? You've dumped me into this new world with no tools or resources. Technically I'm trapped in Nouvus until I have your leave or say so. You say I have magic, but I have no idea how to use it. I don't know anything!

BOHAN

Something we can both agree on.

CORO

(finger pointed)

I know my life doesn't mean much to you, but it means a whole heck of a lot to me-

Bohan grabs her finger and shoves it away. He shakes his hand like he's been burned. More magic? He turns to his cabinet of dried herbs and spices.

CORO (CONT'D)

Hey!

BOHAN

(mild)

That threat about irritation leading unto death really didn't land, did it?

He spreads out a square of linen fabric and adds various herbs with names like CISPHERY, GROUND MICHAEL-ROOT, LAVENDER, and a dab of GRANITE OIL.

CORO

You will help me find my Mum.

BOHAN

Yes, yes, I heard you the first seventeen times.

Bohan gathers the edges of the cloth into a cinch and binds it with twine so it forms a rich perfume bag.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

(whispering incantation)

Stellum or'um hulmis drakir

He spins and pressed it sharply over Coro's nose and mouth, holding the back of her head. She breaths deeply in surprise, tries to yank away. Her eyes roll back as the lids close.

The force of her momentum and the strength of the spell carries her up, her body limp as a rag doll.

She floats above Bohan as though the room were filled with water. A faint light ripples through the room, like starlight on water. Bohan watches with attention.

A gurgling coo twines, followed by a gentled shushing. A woman across from him rocks a small package in her arms. A baby. She meanders.

The woman had long hair, much more auburn than Coro's, her eyes a crystal blue, and features fine. Bohan strides to look into her face.

She looks up, meeting Bohan's gaze directly.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT
Hello, wizard.

Bohan stumbles back, shocked. The wind spirit continues to rock her baby. Worried, he checks, but present-day Coro floats above them, unconscious.

BOHAN
How are you talking to me? This is only memory in her subconscious, from before developmental retention.

Coro's mother laughs. It is like the crisp spring breeze off the edge of a northern cliff.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT
Mages, you think you know everything. But with all your facts and spells, you still can't see what's right in front of you.

She strides over and for the first time he is scared. The wind spirit gives Bohan the baby girl.

Memory or not, she nestles into his stony arms, sleeping contentedly. She fidget, her face scrunching, a disgruntled whine squeaking from her little lungs.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT (CONT'D)
Best rock her.

At first it's stiff, and then something in him relaxes and the bundle settles close, his arm cradling her head. The world zeros in on the small undeveloped features, long lashes flickering on soft cheeks.

Coro's mother is looking at the young woman floating in the air directly above them. The spirit's expression of tender affection has not shifted one drop.

Bohan clears his throat but she interrupts him.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT (CONT'D)

You will need her, mage, for what
is coming.

(deadly serious)

Do not drop my baby girl.

The woman gives one last look to her daughter, then fades from sight. The rippling starlight departs, taking with it the infant from Bohan's rocking.

He stares down at the empty arms, fingers twitching at the missing weight. Coro drops. She lands in his arms. He staggers.

She is still unconscious, face relaxed, a warm rouge brushing her cheeks. The soft child's features are more defined.

Bohan is irritated at the closeness and moves to drop her, then resists, remembering the warning, and nervously looks around. Her wind spirit mother would know.

INT. NOUVUS LIBRARY - DAY

Bohan lays her on the chaise lounge next to the fireplace.

Free of the weight, he cracks his knuckles, shaking the trembling from his limbs.

Bohan stands a long time by the fire, turning it all over in his head. He rolls his neck and shivers.

VITAY

Are you cold sir? Shall I fetch a
sweater?

BOHAN

(needing a sounding board)

So little is known of the wind
spirits. Though I suppose wind
always was, so why should they be
limited by place or time? But if
that is true, their power is
monumental. I am nothing but a piss-
ant to them, much in the same way
humans are to me.

He casts a glance at the young woman on his couch.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Vitay.

VITAY

Sir.

BOHAN

Go through the house and lock the doors. Anything that might be dangerous to a human. She may have powers, but she doesn't know how to use them. Human-proof the manor. Bind the locks to this key.

He offers up a slim gold key the daevin plucks from his hand. Vitay leaves with a faint chittering as he communicates the instructions, followed by the shushing of a colony of daevin wings moving to flight.

His unhappy gaze returns to Coro.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT (V.O.)

You will need her, mage, for what is coming.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. IRISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The green pasture lands roll into the distance, but a man approaches a densely wooded area.

AILIN FINAN (30s) is an Irish man with silver in his hair, scruffy beard, and eyes perpetually crinkled with amusement. He shakes out a blanket at the base of a gnarled tree.

AILIN

(into the forest)

Coro! Coro!

A little girl come running out of the woods, Coro, age 5, with spectacular dimples and freckles. She is nothing but delight. The resemblance between them is clear.

Coro bolts to her 'Da,' intending to tackle him. Instead he catches her up, swinging her around as she giggles.

AILIN (CONT'D)

I caught you! Ye little fairy sprite! Ye child of the wee folk.

He settles down with his back against the tree, wrapping the blanket around himself and Coro. They are a picture of perfect parent-child love, all coziness.

Pulling back, the forest behind them is a tangle of wooden limbs. They watch the sun set, an otherworldly pink twilight.

CORO

Tell me the story again, Da.

AILIN

Which story?

CORO

You know, the one about Mum and the fairy people.

AILIN

Ah yes, well, the first time I saw your Mum, it was at a fairy rath-

CORO

What's a rath?

AILIN

It a place fairies like to gather together. Ring-forts, certain hills-

CORO

But Mum wasn't *really* a fairy, was she?

AILIN

Why not? She came along and gave me you, didn't she?

CORO

(nervously)

But I thought fairies came and stole babies, and left their own in place.

AILIN

(tickling her)

Well that would certainly explain a lot wouldn't it?

Coro shrieks with delight. The branches look more like fingers now.

Her childish laughter echoes back into the woods. Pulling back, there seems to be slight curve to the arrangement of boulders covered in moss. Strange lights flicker within the ferns and leaves. They twitch suddenly... in the breeze?

END FLASHBACK

INT. NOUVUS LIBRARY - NIGHT

Coro's childish laughter echoes as present-day Coro stirs on the couch. The library is dark. She sits up, scrunches her eyes against a headache, tries to clear her throat.

BOHAN

You should drink some water.

Coro jerks back, finding a glass of water before her. Bohan stands straight, looking down at her with irritation.

CORO

What happened?

BOHAN

Drink.

She climbs away, darting behind the couch, remembering.

CORO

You shoved something into my face!
We were in a room full of bottles
and then you did something. What
did you do to me?

Coro backs away, trembling, finally understanding the danger.

BOHAN

It was a memory charm. You should
drink some water, the herbs and
recall system have been recorded to
put the brain into overdrive and
use the body's water to fuel the
process.

CORO

Are you trying to tell me I'm
dehydrated?

He glares at her and holds out the glass of water. It seems innocent enough, a thin cylinder with clear liquid.

CORO (CONT'D)

Why would I take anything you
offered, after you just drugged me?

BOHAN

Fine.

He takes a sip from the glass himself and set it down on the side table.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Do what you like.

He strides back to the fireplace, where there is a tea service, and makes himself a cup.

CORO

Wait, what did you do? You put a whole bunch of things in a bag and made me smell it.

BOHAN

Yes, that is an accurate recollection of events.

Bohan takes a seat in the armchair by the hearth and sips.

CORO

What was in it? No, wait-
Why did you do that? You said something about a memory charm.

BOHAN

(grumbling)

You know, if you're just going to answer all your own questions, you needn't ask me in the first place.

He distracts himself by selecting a biscuit from the plate of treats. She crosses her arms and glares. He is exasperated.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

You were the one who wanted to know about your mother. This is why I don't keep house guests. Utterly unpleasable.

Coro forgets herself and dashes around the couch towards him.

CORO

You wanted memories of my mother?
What did you find out? Who is she?

She comes so close that he sits back, steadying the teacup so it doesn't slosh. He points at the couch.

BOHAN

Sit.

She takes a seat. Bohan flicks his hand lazily and the teapot pours her cup.

The milk follows even as the teacup levitates towards her, a small spoon stirring, a biscuit nestling onto the saucer.

She opens her hand to receive it, and the strange incorporeal stirring of the dainty spoon triggers another memory.

CORO

You moved that chair to trip me, in the café.

BOHAN

Hmm? Oh, yes.

He nods, wholly relaxed.

CORO

Why?

BOHAN

To draw you out, I was certain you had some magical abilities. It should have been reflex for you to feel the magic and catch yourself.

Irritated, she rubs her bruised knee. She's about to ream him out, and instead takes a bracing sip of tea.

CORO

What did you learn from my memories?

BOHAN

Not much.

CORO

You don't know who my mother is?

BOHAN

She is a wind spirit, that much is confirmed.

CORO

Yes, but you already knew that. Who is she?

BOHAN

(snapping)
She didn't give me a name.

CORO

But you know what she looks like
(Waits for contradiction)
Good, then we can find her.

BOHAN

No, we are not going anywhere.

CORO

Why not? You don't know where they are?

BOHAN

I know where the Pelpanori Court resides. But we are not going there.

CORO

Why not?

Vitay floats down to Bohan's eye line.

BOHAN

Because you're as fresh as a spring chick. Less than fifteen minutes in the realm of any real magic and your face nearly melted off.

CORO

I want to meet my Mum, and I'm sure she'll want to meet me.

Vitay beats his wings to attract notice.

BOHAN

Do you want to encounter the entire court not knowing your Q's from your quexells?

(to Vitay)

What is it?

VITAY

You have a visitor, sir.

BOHAN

(startled)

Who—

JACENTY (30'S) sweeps into the room. Her dress is long and dark with many drapes. She shrugs off her coat, revealing a statuesque form of sharply tailored lines cinched at the waist with long skirts and sleeves. Coro freezes. Bohan shoots to his feet.

Perfect black lines rim her eyes, winging back to emphasize her long lashes. Her lips are dark, as is her pulled back hair, but her skin is a soft caramel.

JACENTY

Hanny! How have you been darling?

BOHAN

Jacenty. What are you doing here?

JACENTY

Oh, I was in the neighborhood, and I thought I'd drop by.

CORO

If Nouvus is detached from England, then how did...

JACENTY

And who is this?

She looks Coro over like a piece of cake to consume.

BOHAN

My guest, and I'll thank you to keep a respectful distance. She's human.

JACENTY

No, she's not. She's something much more wonderful than that. Where on earth did he find you darling?

Jacenty takes a seat on the couch next to her and gives a graceful flick in the direction of the tea table. A new teacup appears, china decorated in intricate swirls.

The pot and milk pour themselves and float over. Jacenty stirs the spoon, her long nails a polished dark red.

CORO

(mumbling)

The café, I'm a student

Coro leans away, the hair standing up on the back of her arms. There is something very wrong about this woman.

JACENTY

Well spotted ol' chap.

BOHAN

(uneasy)

Jacenty, this is an intrusion. I'll ask you again to leave.

JACENTY
 (conspiring with Coro)
 Even Bohan can spot a diamond in
 the rough.

She takes one sip, then with a wave the cup disappears.

JACENTY (CONT'D)
 (rising)
 Right, well that's that. We both
 know how much you hate having to
 train pupils. I'll take her off
 your hands.

BOHAN
 How did you find out she was here?

JACENTY
 (dismissive)
 Irrelevant. Come now,
 (patting her dress)
 You, what is your name?

BOHAN
 (threatening)
 She isn't going anywhere.

The teacup goes cold in Coro's hands with a layer of frost, her fingers and cheeks turn pale as a chill descending on the room. Magic rolls in like dark storm clouds with an echoing rumble, irritation flashing through Bohan's eyes.

Jacenty doesn't retreat or flinch from her obelisk-like posture, save for one raised brow.

JACENTY
 Come now, Hanny, we both know you
 hate training students. They get in
 the way of your own studies and
 development of magic. I'm doing you
 a favor.

BOHAN
 You can leave now.

JACENTY
 Let's leave the choice to her,
 shall we?
 (resuming her seat)
 Now, young woman, if I had to
 guess, I'd say you know nothing of
 the magical world and our doings.
 (MORE)

JACENTY (CONT'D)

Bohan may have found you, but if you've spent more than five minutes in his presence then you know by now, he is a four-thousand-year-old grouch who only spoils with age. He will ignore you and your training in favor of his own studies, and when he does train you, you will most certainly not walk away unscathed.

BOHAN

How dare—

JACENTY

(dismissive)

I've heard stories.

(back to Coro)

He may look the refined gentleman, but I assure you he does not play the part. You are a young woman. Wouldn't you be more comfortable studying under a first class wizardess, well-traveled and well-respected. I could offer you the world, and I would never hold you back.

Coro considers, weighing the options.

CORO

I'm fine here, thank you.

JACENTY

Excuse me?

CORO

I think I'll stay. I've learned more about my mother from him in the last day than I've known my entire life.

Jacenty leans forward to give Coro a piece of her mind, a poisonous anger bubbling into her eyes.

BOHAN

You heard her Jacenty, she made her choice. Now leave.

The wizardess huffs in disgust and thrusts back on her coat of many layers, belting it into place.

JACENTY

You will regret this decision,
young woman, and when you do, I
will be waiting.

She storms out. In the silence a grandfather clock still ticks. Bohan is starting at her. He hasn't moved, hands clasped behind his back, frowning.

CORO

When do we begin?

Bohan remains frozen, confused on many issues.

CORO (CONT'D)

Bohan?

Seeing he is still processing, Coro rises, puts her cup on the table.

BOHAN

No, this has already gone too far.

He crosses the room, grasps her wrist, and starts the incantation. The wood paneling and leather bindings of the library dissipate into a damp breezy Oxford street.

EXT. OXFORD STREET - NIGHT

CORO

What? Bohan! No!

She stands alone. No evidence of Bohan. Coro's not buying it.

CORO (CONT'D)

Where are you?

She turns, looking for him, still nothing. She finally gives up, rubbing her arms against the cold, and continues down the street. After a moment Bohan follows, still frowning, keeping to the shadows. There is a rippling transparent quality to him, because he has cast a charm to hide him from view.

She ignores the people she passes, all of them wearing coats. She walks past a large group of boys and several heads turn at once.

STUDENT

Hey Coro.

She waves back but carries on. Bohan frowns deeper. He hurries after her as she turns down a street and past a porter. Bohan hangs back, thinking it all over. A harsh breeze rustles nearby trees.

MOTHER, WIND SPIRIT (V.O.)
Do not drop my baby girl.

BOHAN
Damn it.
(muttered tracking charm)
Sfan-fri actung manell.

He transports himself into Coro's tiny dorm room.

INT. CORO'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

A key scrapes in the lock and Coro opens the door to find Bohan standing in the middle of the tiny space with folded arms, unimpressed.

BOHAN
It's a closet, like I said. I don't see why you were in such a hurry to come back here.

After her shock, Coro steps inside and closes the door.

CORO
Bohan, why did you bring me back here?

BOHAN
I have my life, and you have yours, albeit a small one. It was time to bring you back to it and let me get on with mine.

He reclines on the bed, arms propped behind his head, legs crossed at the ankles. The scuffed flats of his shoes look too large, owing to the fact that they hang off the bed by a good five inches.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
How do you live in this hole?

CORO
It's not like I've got four thousand years of shite to drag around, or a strange fetish for lethal magical creatures.

He blinks. Touché. He investigates the rest of the room.

BOHAN

Are you sure your father has no pixie heritage? There's been much debate about what species crossed bloodlines with the Irish in those early years of civilization development.

Coro looks like she's about to punch him but holds her temper just in check.

CORO

How am I supposed to get back so you can train me?

BOHAN

I'm not training you. Jacenty was right about that. I hate training pupils.

CORO

What? But you said you would! I chose you over her.

BOHAN

And that shows good sense, but the answer is still no.

CORO

Then I'll just wait till she comes and finds me.

Bohan forces Coro to step back against the door as he leans over her, enraged.

BOHAN

(vicious)

That woman is a viper. No, I'll set a protective ward around your room.

(to himself)

That ought to satisfy her request.

Coro's objections are lost as Bohan begins the spell, intricately lacing verses together. It is similar to the miasma he wove over himself in the café.

He examines the handiwork, illuminated blue lines of text marking the room and then fading. Before leaving, he cast Coro a glance, and is surprised to see her looking at the fading text on the wall.

He doesn't stay to find out more. He is gone before the words of the spell fades from the walls.

INT. BOHAN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Bohan tosses and turns in his bed. He wakes up.

BOHAN

Someone tipped Jacenty off.

He let's out a long, very annoyed groan, then gets dressed and goes back to Oxford.

EXT. OXFORD STREET - DAY

Bohan waits on the street corner, in sight of Coro's window but unable to see into it. The streets fill with undergrads going to class. No sight of Coro.

Frowning, he whispers an auditory incantation. His warm breath condenses against the air and floats up to fog the glass of Coro's window. Abruptly her alarm goes off.

Magnified by the spell, it so startles Bohan he spills hot tea all over himself. He curses loudly, making students laugh and look back at the empty patch of sidewalk. They hurry on. Coro comes out a few minutes later.

BOHAN

(muttered)

Undergrads.

Bohan spends the next few days following Coro, learning her schedule. He watches from roof tops, and around corners, bored and irritated.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-- After classes she goes to the library. She walks up and down isles, pulling out spines, looking for magical texts.

--She goes to book store and makes a purchase.

--She sits in a cafe and reads her new copy of Irish fairytales. Bohan rolls his eyes, hardcore judging her.

--Occasionally he sees other professors, but keeps out of sight.

-- Bohan sighs in exasperation at finding no one watching Coro. Decides to draw them out.

END MONTAGE

EXT. OXFORD, RADCLIFF SQUARE - DAY

Bohan surveys Radcliff Square from a roof top. Not many people are out. Sunlight flickers over the square, peeking through clouds. He holds up his hands, recites some words, casting a spell. Threads of magic descend over the square.

He takes breakfast at Vaults & Garden, the café in the square. He tucks into a hearty breakfast, another meal waiting at the seat opposite him, and orders drinks. He reads a paper on the going-ons of magic at Magnicottis, perusing the upcoming lectures.

A small gasp. He doesn't look up. In a moment, a very angry undergrad stands before him. Coro is in her usual windswept state, hands flexing angrily.

CORO

Bohan, you, you-

BOHAN

Take a seat, cardboard cereal doesn't count as breakfast.

He points to the chair across. About to protest, she then spots the extra meal: an egg sandwich. Her stomach growls. She sinks into the chair.

A waitress delivers two lattes . Bohan finished his bite and sips at the large white mug. Coro picks up hers and stares down at it.

CORO

You were expecting me.

BOHAN

Oxford's best and brightest.
I'm here on some business and
thought I'd check in.

CORO

That's right, there are other
professors who teach magic here.
Who are they? Maybe they would
agree to teach me.

Bohan is doubtful.

EXT. OXFORD, ST. MARY'S PASSAGE - DAY

Archie sees Bohan and quickly pulls out his camera.

EXT. OXFORD, RADCLIFF SQUARE - DAY

BOHAN

The examinations are rigorous. Most wizards study for years before applying.

Coro is disappointed, but set on her course.

CORO

Alright, where do I start?

Bohan considers her. He takes out a note pad and writes a name and address on it in elegant script. He passes the note.

CORO (CONT'D)

A friend of yours?

BOHAN

No. I don't think Gexol and I will ever be friends.

She folds the piece of paper and tucks it into her bag. Bohan's attention is pulled as his trap is triggered. He smiles. Under the table his ring glows as his fingers twist, snapping the trap closed.

CORO

Well, thank you.

Coro chugs down the latte in great gulps. She shoulders her bag and wraps up the egg sandwich in a napkin.

BOHAN

(feeling used)
You're leaving?

CORO

I've got classes, which I assume you knew, otherwise you wouldn't have waited here for me.

(sticking out her hand)

Thanks for all your help, Bohan. I appreciate the contact. Now you can finally be rid of me.

He doesn't move from his reclined position, conflicted. She gives him a mischievous grin. He shakes her hand. He watches her go, lonely.

Coro hurries off to her class, hunching her shoulders against the chill. The English sky is grey again. The air is damp.

Bohan turns his attention to the matter at hand, taking one last sip of his drink and leaving the napkin on the table. He sighs, stretching his neck, rolling his shoulders, and rises.

EXT. OXFORD, ST. MARY'S PASSAGE - DAY

Bohan finds Archie in Saint Mary's Passage disguising himself behind some trees. His camera is pointed towards the outdoor seating arms shaking, unable to move.

Archie in't tall. He's thin, with fine brown hair, wearing a faded blazer. He trembles like a fly struggling to free itself from a web.

BOHAN

Ah, there you are.

Bohan lands a hand on his shoulder, spiring them away.

EXT. OXFORD, ROOFTOP - DAY

They stand on the roof of a very high building. Carved stone turrets guard the perimeter. The wind bites more fiercely up here. Bohan grabs Archie by his shirt collar and thrusts him hard against the tower extending upwards.

BOHAN

I would be flattered by the attention, except I'm rather a private person.

ARCHIE

Please, no! I'm just a student! It was just a job.

BOHAN

Well, Alfie, evidently your employer didn't tell you exactly who you were screwing with.

Bohan's eyes burn with rage and power.

ARCHIE

(sniveling)

I have no idea who you are!

He still has not looked at Bohan, eyes squeezed shut.

BOHAN

Do you expect me to believe that?

He presses his face so close that Archie whimpers.

ARCHIE

It's true! My job is to track unusual magic that appears within the university. I take pictures and give it to my employer. I have an alarm system, and you triggered it, and then I saw you disappear with that girl. That's all I know, I swear!

His lower lip trembles. Bohan sets the boy down.

BOHAN

(irritated)

You don't know who I am?

ARCHIE

No, I was instructed to let my employer know if you came back though.

BOHAN

What does your employer want with Coro? The girl.

Archie continues to look bewildered.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

Not the sharpest tack in the box are you? Well Alfie-

ARCHIE

My name's Archie.

BOHAN

Same difference. Why does your employer want the pictures?

ARCHIE

I don't know what she does with them.

BOHAN

She - Jacenty?

ARCHIE

Who?

BOHAN

Your employer, who is she?

ARCHIE

I really shouldn't-

Bohan grabs Archie by the shirt front and yanks him over to the edge of the building, ignoring the boy's cries. It takes a few moments of shaking, crying, and sniveling.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

She's got a place off New College Lane! But you won't be able to get in. It's all hush down there, very secret, underground. Even if I take you, they'll see you coming a mile off.

BOHAN

I'll be fine without you, thanks.
And here, Alfie, our paths diverge.

Bohan lets him go. Archie falls four stories, screaming all the way. He hits the cobbles hard enough to bruise, but not snap anything vital. Bohan slowed his plummet.

He does not spare the same courtesy to Archie's camera, however, and tosses it over the side. It smashes to pieces next to the young mage, who groans.

INT. BODLEIAN LIBRARY - NIGHT

Coro sits at a desk in the library, books spread around her, working on her laptop. She rubs her eyes, tired. She takes out Bohan's note. In elegant curling font it reads "William Gexol, 29 Bower Row."

She looks up the address on her computer and, to her frustration, Bower Row doesn't exist. There is a Bower End, but that is a half hour drive away.

With a huff she leans back in her chair, chewing on her lip. Following a hunch, she goes looking for older maps of Oxford. She finds a book with copies, tracking the development of Oxford through the centuries.

Finally, on a map from the sixteen hundreds, she finds it: Bower Row. On a copy of a current day map of Oxford, she triangulates its location and marks it.

Excitement growing, Coro snatches her coat and bag and steps out onto the streets.

EXT. OXFORD STREET - NIGHT

The sky has darkened as the rain clouds thicken, the wind picking up. She sets out to the first location, and stops when she reaches it, looking at her map.

There is no opening or 'Row' present, only the solid stone wall of a building. She stares hard at the map, looking at the surrounding streets, but when she looks up again, there it is, as if she simply hadn't looked hard enough.

CORO
(clucking)
You, very tricky.

EXT. BOWER ROW - NIGHT

She hurries onward, reading the numbers, and finally steps up to one door set back in an arched portico. She knocks. No response.

She pounds and only lets up when she hears someone drawing near. She glances at her watch; past nine in the evening. She composes her features.

Gexol, a man slightly shorter than her and much rounder, answers the door. This man looks like a don, quivering double chin and all. Not what she expected.

CORO
Hello, Professor Gexol?
(sticking out her hand.)
My name is Coro Finan, and I'd like
to study magic under you sir.

GEXOL
I'm not taking pupils now.

He shuts the door. She pounds on it.

CORO
Professor? Bohan sent me. Professor
please!

The door opens sharply. She falls, Gexol catches her arm.

GEXOL
Bohan sent you?

He looks anxiously from side to side on the street

CORO
Yes. He gave me your information.
He refused to teach me but he
thought you might be willing. I've
only recently discovered I even
have magic, you see. I know I have
to take exams, but if you'd just
tell me how to get started-

He pulls her in, leading her to the parlor.

GEXOL

You best start at the beginning, my dear.

EXT. OXFORD, NEW COLLEGE LANE - NIGHT

Bohan wears a worn trench-coat and a scuffed hat. He waits at the edges of New College Lane until dark. More people turn down the alley he is interested in.

Bohan makes his way down the brick alleyway. It is disturbingly narrow, and only narrows the farther he walks.

Eventually the walls of the alley touch both arms, him being broad shouldered. If he wants to go any further, he will have to turn sideways. He does not.

Two rats scurry past him in the crevasses.

BOHAN

(snort, to the Wall)
I'm not a rodent. I'll just wait,
give you a moment to negotiate your
priorities.

When the wall does not move, Bohan lays a hand on the rough brick surface and lets it grow warm, a bright red, his ring glows. When the wall does not budge, he sends a nasty shock through the pads of his fingers. Begrudgingly, the alleyway widens.

BOHAN (CONT'D)

(straightening his coat)
I'm glad we could come to an
understanding.

EXT. PINE SPEAKER'S COURTYARD - NIGHT

He continues on and eventually comes out into an open courtyard created by the backs of various buildings. It is full of people and creatures, out for a pint.

There are picnic tables around the rickety building, covered by fairy light hanging midair. It has started to rain, but the drops only slide off of some invisible shield, channeled into the plants and potted trees around the establishment.

There is a coziness to the courtyard. Bohan keeps his head low. He sails through undisturbed.

Bohan descends the steps, worn after the last few centuries, and ducks his head beneath the awning, entering the tavern half underground.

INT. PINE SPEAKER'S TAVERN - NIGHT

The tavern buzzes with life. His stature attracts a few glances. He ducks his head, emphasizing the tilt to his shoulders, and signals to the barman.

Bohan sips at a pint and is impressed. He surveys the pub and turns away quickly as Archie comes down the steps. Archie has a large bruise on his cheek.

Bohan meanders after him to the back of the pub. There is a private office with a window of bubbled glass. Voices come from within.

PINE SPEAKER

What do you mean he caught you?

The second voice is quiet.

PINE SPEAKER (CONT'D)

You don't need to know who or what you're tracking, just keep me informed and keep yourself out of sight.

ARCHIE

On that, he broke my camera. I'll be needing another one.

PINE SPEAKER

I don't care about your camera! Did he get anything out of you?

Bohan steps into the room and shuts the door.

BOHAN

I'm afraid so.

INT. PINE SPEAKER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Her office is like an intimate woods. Moss carpets the ground. Roots make a nook in the corner, a stream runs along the side wall. An oak desk and willow chairs grow out of the ground. Lanterns hang along the roof, lightning bugs drift through the air flicking on and off.

BOHAN

Well, would you look at that.

He gives a low whistle and goes to inspect frames hanging on the side wall. Inside are extremely rare pressed flowers. Bohan takes another sip of his ale.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
 I taste hickory, green apple, and a
 hint of crescent moon.
 (setting it aside)
 Fine establishment you have here,
 madam..?

He takes in the strange woman full of prickles.

PINE SPEAKER
 You are not welcome here, mage.
 Leave. At once.

The wood of the walls breaks off into thick splinters and turn to point at him.

BOHAN
 You bring new meaning to the term
 'looking daggers,' madam.
 (he snaps his fingers)
 Spithousi!

Electricity flies through the room, bursting the splinters into flame like kindling. Fire falls to the ground and catches. Archie makes for the door but it remains locked.

BOHAN (CONT'D)
 Poor chap, not your day is it?

The pine speaker extends her arms, finger spreading to the ceiling. With a great rush, rain water from outside pours on the office, douses the lanterns, but not the flames.

PINE SPEAKER
 (in horror)
 No!

Bohan towers over her in the next moment, his hand out to the side, ready to strengthen or quench the flames.

BOHAN
 I'll ask again, who are you?

PINE SPEAKER
 (teeth bared)
 Rohana.

BOHAN
 And what are you?

PINE SPEAKER

I am a pine speaker.

That raises an eyebrow.

BOHAN

Pine speakers don't exist.

PINE SPEAKER

Yet here I am.

BOHAN

(doubtful)

You were a human with untapped magical ability who-

PINE SPEAKER

- Never whelped and died alone in the woods? Yes. We're rare.

He glances at the wooden building. The flames chew onwards through the furnishing towards the wooden walls.

BOHAN

Why did you have me followed?

PINE SPEAKER

The magic, it ails. The magic is sickening, like a tree that rots.

BOHAN

What dealings have you with Jacenty?

PINE SPEAKER

The sorceress pays me to look out for her succulents. It is business, only business, nothing more.

Her eyes are fixed on the carpet of moss and the scorches darkening the floor.

Archie cowers in a corner. Bohan closes his hand, snuffing the flames out in a moment. Smoke rises from the floor and walls. Bohan dusts off his jacket from the ash in the air.

BOHAN

The Magnicottis council of wizards will never let your little underground stand. I'm surprised they haven't smoked you out yet, you and your rabble.

PINE SPEAKER

Do you think, wizard, my organization could have gotten this far if the council didn't agree to it? They are funding us.

Bohan levels a look on her, hiding his shock.

BOHAN

Who is your patron?

She stays silent, then she flinches back when he steps near, cowering as the shadows lengthen around him.

PINE SPEAKER

Gexol, William Gexol.

INT. PINE SPEAKER'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Bohan bursts into the main room and flies up the steps, patrons staring after him.

EXT. OXFORD, NEW COLLEGE LANE - CONTINUOUS

He hurtles back down the brick alley which remains wide, as eager for him to leave as he is.

EXT. BOWER ROW - NIGHT

Professor Gexol steps outside his door, zipping up his coat against the rain. Coro closes the door behind them, giving him a tentative smile.

GEXOL

I want to show you something.

He leads her down the street. They disappear into the rain.

END OF EPISODE